

LEARNING TOGETHER FOR CHANGE

ADVANCING EDUCATION FOR ALL THROUGH HIGHER EDUCATION



Arusha Declaration on Higher Education for Education for All

Arusha, Tanzania, 29 April 2015

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Learning Together for Change Conference: Arusha Declaration on Higher Education for Education for All

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WHY WE CONVENED

With its unparalleled capacity to appraise and facilitate sociocultural transformation, higher education should play an indispensable role in realizing the mission and goals of two interrelated international movements - Education for All (EFA) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). In fact, without robust and sustained engagement by the higher education community around the globe, it is likely that EFA and SDG will not be able to achieve their full potential simply because the expertise necessary to pursue credibly such means and ends - assessment, curricular development, program structure, work-related training - will not be readily accessible.

Complicating matters, for a myriad of reasons, educators, researchers, and leaders within higher education around the globe too often are neither sufficiently aware of, nor compelled by, EFA or SDG in their daily lives and work. For these and related reasons, we convened the Learning for Change Conference to challenge and explore this fundamental dynamic, by offering a blueprint for how and why higher education at large may assume an appropriate role within the EFA and SDG movements.

EFA, SDG, AND HE: AN ESSENTIAL PARTNERSHIP

Through the careful assembly of relevant stakeholders, the International Association of Universities (IAU), the Association of Swedish Higher Education (SUHF), and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), engaged educators, researchers and leaders from 15 Swedish universities and their collaborative partners in fourteen African countries in a three-day long workshop conference in Arusha, Tanzania, 27-29 April 2015. A principle objective of Learning Together for Change was to develop a consensual, actionable, and measurable blueprint in advance of the UNESCO World Education Forum in Korea, May 2015, the summary of which is described in the below declaration. To apprehend our perspective on the inextricable relationship between Education for All (EFA), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), and Higher Education (HE), it may be helpful to provide brief background and context.

The Education for All (EFA) movement is a global commitment to provide quality basic education for all children, youth and adults; EFA contends further that education is a fundamental human right. At the World Education Forum (Dakar, 2000), 164 governments pledged to pursue EFA, identified six integral goals to be met by 2015, and began a process of collaboration among respective governments, development agencies, civil society, and the private sector. Despite these important advances, the essential role of higher education was neither addressed nor included in these goals, a serious omission as noted above. To address such issues, the International Association of Universities (IAU) began in 2005 to investigate how universities could contribute to achieving EFA targets; the HEEFA project (Higher Education for Education for All) subsequently was established, and has played a central role in the planning of the Learning Together for Change Conference.

At a parallel level, because the era of the Millennium Development Goals concludes in 2015, the United Nations has been mobilizing the world to define a compelling post-2015 agenda. As its lead educational agency, UNESCO is pursuing "Sustainable Development Goals" (SDGs) by engaging governments around the world as well as a wide range of national, regional, and international partners, multilateral and bilateral funding agencies, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, and broad-based civil society organizations. However and again, a clear and explicit role for higher education in the pursuit of the SDGs has not yet been sufficiently specified. For example, the current draft of the SDGs developed by the UN - designed to further this initiative between now and 2030 - references education in only one of its 17 goals:

*Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education
and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*

Regarding higher education, "tertiary education and the university" are referenced under 4.3 (i.e., by 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university).

Although such mention is commendable, our central contention is that the role and resources of higher education can and must be integrated much more explicitly and deliberately throughout the SDGs if both this movement - and its EFA corollary - are to realize their potential by 2030.

Toward such means and ends, we the undersigned offer - on behalf of the delegates of Learning Together for Change - the following declaration for consideration at the forthcoming UNESCO World Education Forum in Korea, May 2015, and beyond.

Arusha Declaration

The participants of the Learning Together for Change - Advancing Education for All through Higher Education Conference - hosted by the Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology, Arusha, and University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania - convened 27-29 April 2015 in Arusha. Representing 15 Swedish and 17 African Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), and 13 other international organizations charged with a myriad of national, regional and global responsibilities, we declare our commitment to the essential role that the higher education community around the globe must play if the interrelated missions and goals of Education for All (EFA) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) are to be realized. We therefore respectfully request more deliberate recognition and explicit integration of the many and varied contributions that Higher Education (HE) may offer to the development and pursuit of EFA and SDG via the final articulation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals for 2030.

In turn, participants of the Learning Together for Change Conference commit themselves to promote EFA and SDG as scholars, educators, and leaders, with our students and colleagues, in our respective institutions and organizations, and through the allied professional networks and systems to which we belong around the world. We pledge to do so via activities under four overarching themes that represent the heart of everything we have contemplated and accomplished through Learning Together for Change:

Theme 1: Sustainability and Change

Theme 2: Learning, Technology, and Globalization

Theme 3: Rights, Equality, and Gender

Theme 4: Quality

The following priority action steps have collectively been developed and agreed upon under each of the above themes, and are specified below.¹

Theme 1: Sustainability and Change

Action 1: Engage higher education stakeholders (e.g., educators, scholars, students, administrators) in the application of their knowledge, skills, and values toward the missions and goals of EFA and SDG.

Action 2: Educate and engage the broader public (e.g., entrepreneurs, policy makers, the public at large) regarding the drivers of social, economic, political, and environmental change, and how the missions and goals of EFA and SDG may help meet local and global needs.

Theme 2: Learning, Technology, and Globalization

Action 3: Identify effective pedagogical ICT tools for sustainable Pedagogical Learning Environments (PLE) at all educational levels, adjusted to an ever-changing digital world.

Action 4: Support teachers' transitions from lecturing to a collaborative engaging teaching style for a learning society.

Theme 3: Rights, Equality, and Gender

Action 5: Implement awareness of the Convention of the Rights of the Child, especially from a holistic view, with the three P's in mind (protection, provision and participation) into Higher Education, in order to strengthen the aspects of Global Civic/Citizenship Education, which is a vehicle in realizing and achieving EFA. Create awareness of CRC and gender inequalities among the various stakeholders in order to ensure equal rights in education at all levels.

Action 6: Strengthen University-Community engagement and research dissemination to work together for change (collaborative knowledge production and implementation of research results).

Theme 4: Quality

Action 7: Guidelines for the promotion of cognitive justice and on inclusive pedagogy for multiple knowledge should be developed and reflected in policy documents for education in general as well as for teacher education.

Action 8: Ensure necessary conditions for the realization of post-2015 goals through securing that data for quality assurance are relevant, well defined and reliable, and that necessary analytical capacities are at hand.

¹ Additional Learning Together for Change documents and outcomes are available upon request.

Through the recognition and integration of higher education within the Sustainable Development Goals - including but not limited to a strong emphasis on Education for All - the participants of the Learning Together for Change Conference will have a global basis to bolster our contributions to the vision of EFA and SDG, which are vital in our time, and with which we resonate deeply, as educators, scholars, students, leaders, citizens, and human beings.

By acknowledging the indispensable role of Higher Education to Education for All and the Sustainable Development Goals, we will be empowered to advocate, conceptualize, implement, refine, demonstrate, and disseminate the acceptance and impact of these crucial movements through our lives and work, both locally and globally.

Arusha, Tanzania, 29 April 2015

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